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CHAPTER III

CONSTANTINE'S SUCCESSORS TO JOVIAN: AND THE STRUGGLE WITH PERSIA

DEATH had surprised Constantine when preparing to meet Persian aggression on the Eastern frontier and it seems certain that the Emperor had made no final provision for the succession to the throne, though later writers profess to know of a will which parcelled out the Roman world among the members of his family. During his lifetime his three sons had been created Caesars and while for his nephew Hannibalianus he had fashioned a kingdom in Asia, to his nephew Delmatius had been assigned the Ripa Gothica. Possibly we are to see in these latter appointments an attempt to satisfy discontent at Court; it may be that Optatus and Ablabius, espousing the cause of a younger branch of the imperial stock, had forced Constantine's hand and that it was for this interference that they afterwards paid the penalty of their lives. But it would seem a more probable suggestion that the Persian danger was thought to demand an older and more experienced governor than Constantius, while the boy Constans was deemed unequal to withstand the Goths in the north. At least the plan would appear to have been in substance that of a threefold division of spheres itself suggested by administrative necessity; Constantine was true to the principle of Diocletian, and it was only a superficial view which saw in this devolution of the central power a partition of the Roman Empire.¹ Thus on the Emperor's death there followed an interregnum of nearly four months. Constantine had, however, been successful in inspiring his soldiers with his own dynastic views; they feared new tumult and internal struggle and in face of the twenty year old Constantius felt themselves to be the masters. The armies agreed that they would have none but the sons of Constantine to rule over them, and at one blow they murdered all the other relatives of the dead Emperor save only the child Julian and Gallus the future Caesar; in the latter's case men looked to his own ill health to spare the executioner. At the same time perished Optatus and Ablabius. On 9 September 337 Constantius, Constantine II, and Constans each assumed the title of Augustus as joint Emperors.

¹ Cf. Victor, *Caes.* xxxix. 30, *quasi partito imperio.*

His contemporaries were unable to agree how far Constantius was to be held responsible for this assassination. He alone of the sons of Constantine was present in the capital, it was he who stood to gain most by the deed, the property of the victims fell into his hands, while it was said that he himself regarded his ill-success in war and his childlessness as Heaven's punishment and that this murder was one of the three sins which he regretted on his death-bed. In later times some, though considering the slaughter as directly inspired by the Emperor, have yet held him justified and have viewed him as the victim of a tragic necessity of state. Certainty is impossible but the circumstances suggest that inaction and not participation is the true charge against Constantius; the army which made and unmade emperors was determined that there should be no rival to question their choice. The massacre had fatal consequences; it was the seed from which sprang Julian's mistrust and ill-will: in a panegyric written for the Emperor's eye he might admit the plea of compulsion, but the deep-seated conviction remained that he was left an orphan through his cousin's crime.

In the summer of 338 the new rulers assembled in Pannonia (or possibly at Viminacium in Dacia, not far from the Pannonian frontier) to determine their spheres of government. According to their father's division, it would seem, Spain, Britain, and the two Gauls fell to Constantine: the two Italies, Africa, Illyricum, and Thrace were subjected to Constans, while southward from the Propontis, Asia and the Orient with Pontus and Egypt were entrusted to Constantius. It was thus to Constantius that, on the death of Hannibalianus, Armenia and the neighbouring allied tribes naturally passed, but with this addition the eastern Augustus appears to have remained content. The whole of the territory subject to Delmatius, *i.e.* the Ripa Gothica which probably comprised Dacia, Moesia I and II, and Scythia (perhaps even Pannonia and Noricum) went to swell the share of Constans who was now but fifteen years of age.¹ But though both the old and the new Rome were thus in the hands of the most youthful of the three emperors, the balance of actual power still seemed heavily weighted in favour of Constantine, the ruler of the West; indeed, he appears to have assumed the position of guardian over his younger brother. It may be difficult to account for the moderation of Constantius, but Julian points out that a war with Persia was imminent, the army was disorganised, and the preparations for the campaign insufficient; domestic peace was the Empire's great need, while Constantius himself really strengthened his own position by renouncing further claims: to widen his sphere of government might have only served to limit his moral authority. Further he was perhaps unwilling to demand for himself a capital in which his kinsmen had been

¹ In his eighteenth year, Eutrop. x. 9, cf. Seeck, *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*, xvii. pp. 39 sqq.

so recently murdered : his self-denial should prove his innocence.¹ During the next thirteen years three great and more or less independent interests absorbed the energies of Constantius. the welfare and doctrine of the Christian Church,² the long drawn and largely ineffective struggle against Persia and lastly the assertion and maintenance of his personal influence in the affairs of the West.

It was to Asia that Constantius hastened after his meeting with his co-rulers. Before his arrival Nisibis had successfully withstood a Persian siege (autumn 337 or spring 338), and the Emperor at once made strenuous efforts to restore order and discipline among the Roman forces. Profiting by his previous experience he organised a troop of mail-clad horsemen after the Persian model — the wonder of the time — and raised recruits both for the cavalry and infantry regiments; he demanded extraordinary contributions from the eastern provinces, enlarged the river flotillas and generally made his preparations for rendering effective resistance to Persian attacks. The history of this border warfare is a tangled tale and our information scanty and fragmentary. In Armenia the fugitive king and those nobles who with him were loyal to Rome were restored to their country, but for the rest the campaigns resolved themselves in the main into the successive forays across the frontier of Persian or Roman troops. Though Ludi Persici (13-17 May) were founded, though court orators could claim that the Emperor had frequently crossed the Tigris, had raised fortresses on its banks and laid waste the enemy's territory with fire and sword, yet the lasting results of these campaigns were sadly to seek: now an Arab tribe would be induced to make common cause with Rome (as in 338) and to harry the foe, now a Persian town would be captured and its inhabitants transported and settled within the Empire, but it was rare indeed for the armies of both powers to meet face to face in the open field. Constantius persistently declined to take the aggressive; he hesitated to risk any great engagement which even if successful might entail a heavy loss in men whom he could ill afford to spare. Of one battle alone have we any detailed account. Sapor had collected a vast army; conscripts of all ages were enlisted, while neighbouring tribesmen served for Persian gold. In three divisions the host crossed the Tigris and by the Emperor's orders the frontier guards did not dispute the passage. The Persians occupied an entrenched camp at Hileia or Ellia near Singara, while a distance of some 150 stades lay between them and the Roman army. Even on Sapor's advance Constantius true to his defensive policy awaited the enemy's attack; it may be, as Libanius asserts, that Rome's best troops were absent at the time. Beneath their fortifications the Persians had posted their splendid mailed cavalry

¹ For the above of Victor, *Epit.* xli. 20; Vita Artemii Martyris, *A.S. Boll* Tom. viii. Oct 20, Eutyches, *Chron. Alex.* Ol. 279, Seeck, *Zeits. f. Numismatik*, l.c.

² See Chap. v.

(*cataphracti*) and upon the ramparts archers were stationed. On a mid-summer morning, probably in the year 344 (possibly 348), the struggle began. At midday the Persians feigned flight in the direction of their camp, hoping that thus their horsemen would charge upon an enemy disorganised by long pursuit. It was already evening when the Romans drew near the fortifications. Constantius gave orders to halt until the dawn of the new day; but the burning heat of the sun had caused a raging thirst, the springs lay within the Persian camp and the troops with little experience of their Emperor's generalship refused to obey his commands and resumed the attack. Clubbing the enemy's cavalry, they stormed the palisades. Sapor fled for his life to the Tigris, while the heir to his throne was captured and put to death. As night fell, the victors turned to plunder and excess, and under cover of the darkness the Persian fugitives re-formed and won back their camp. But success came too late; their confidence was broken and with the morning the retreat began.

Turning to the history of the West after the meeting of the Augusti in 338, it would appear that Constantine forthwith claimed an authority superior to that of his co-rulers;¹ he even legislated for Africa although this province fell within the jurisdiction of Constans. The latter, however, soon asserted his complete independence of his elder brother and in autumn (338?) after a victory on the Danube assumed the title of Sarmaticus. At this time (339) he probably sought to enlist the support of Constantius, surrendering to the latter Thrace and Constantinople.² Disappointed of his hopes, it would seem that the ruler of the West now demanded for himself both Italy and Africa. Early in 340 he suddenly crossed the Alps and at Aquileia rashly engaged the advanced guard of Constans who had marched from Naissus in Dacia, where news had reached him of his brother's attack. Constantine falling into an ambush perished, and Constans was now master of Britain, Spain, and the Gauls (before 9 April 340). He proved himself a terror to the barbarians and a general of untiring energy who travelled incessantly, making light of extremes of heat and cold. In 341 and 342 he drove back an inroad of the Franks and compelled that restless tribe "for whom inaction was a confession of weakness" to conclude a peace: he disregarded the perils of the English Channel in winter, and in January 343 crossed from Boulogne to Britain, perhaps to repel the Picts and Scots. His rule is admitted to have been at the outset vigorous and just, but the promise of his early years was not maintained: his exactions grew more intolerable, his private vices more shameless, while his favourites were allowed to violate the laws with impunity. It would seem, however, to have been his unconcealed contempt for the army which caused his

¹ This is an inference drawn from his coinage.

² Cf. the language of the *via Artemis*, i.e. ὁ δὲ Κωνστάντιος . . . τὸ τῆς ἐψας δσπάζεται μέρος καὶ τότε . . . κ.τ.λ.

fall. A party at Court conspired with Marcellinus, Count of the sacred largesses, and Magnentius, commander of the picked corps of Joviani and Herculeani, to secure his overthrow. Despite his Roman name Magnentius was a barbarian: his father had been a slave and subsequently a freedman in the service of Constantine. While at Augustodunum, during the absence of the Emperor on a hunting expedition, Marcellinus on the pretext of a banquet in honour of his son's birthday feasted the military leaders (18 January 350); wine had flowed freely and the night was already far advanced, when Magnentius suddenly appeared among the revellers, clad in the purple. He was straightway acclaimed Augustus: the rumour spread: folk from the country-side poured into the city: Illyrian horsemen who had been drafted into the Gallic regiments joined their comrades, while the officers hardly knowing what was afoot were carried by the tide of popular enthusiasm into the usurper's camp. Constans fled for Spain and at the foot of the Pyrenees by the small frontier fortress of Helene was murdered by Gaiso, the barbarian emissary of Magnentius. The news of his brother's death reached Constantius when the winter was almost over, but true to his principle never to sacrifice the Empire to his own personal advantage he remained in the East, providing for its safety during his absence and appointing Lucillianus to be commander-in-chief.

The hardships and oppression which the provinces had suffered under Constans were turned by Magnentius to good account. A month after his usurpation Italy had joined him and Africa was not slow to follow. The army of Illyricum was wavering in its fidelity when, upon the advice of Constantia sister of Constantius, Vetranio, *magister peditum* of the forces on the Danube, allowed himself to be acclaimed Emperor (1 March, at Mursa or Sirmium) and immediately appealed for help to Constantius. The latter recognised the usurper, sent Vetranio a diadem and gave orders that he should be supported by the troops on the Pannonian frontier. Meanwhile in Rome, the elect of the mob, Flavius Popilius Nepotianus, cousin of Constantius, enjoyed a brief and bloody reign of some 28 days until, through the treachery of a senator, he fell into the hands of the soldiers of Magnentius, led by Marcellinus the newly appointed *magister officiorum*.

In the East, Nisibis was besieged for the third and last time: Sapor's object was, it would seem, permanently to settle a Persian colony within the city. The siege was pressed with unexampled energy; the Mygdonius was turned from its course, and thus upon an artificial lake the fleet plied its rams but without effect. At length under the weight of the waters part of the city wall collapsed; cavalry and elephants charged to storm the breach, but the huge beasts turned in flight and broke the lines of the assailants. A new wall rose behind the old, and though four months had passed, Jacobus, Bishop of Nisibis, never lost heart. Then Sapor learned that the Massagetae were invading his own

country and slowly the Persian host withdrew. For a time the Eastern frontier was at peace (A.D. 350).

In the West while Magnentius sought to win the recognition of Constantius, Vetrario played a waiting game. At last, the historians tell us, the Illyrian Emperor broke his promises and made his peace with Magnentius. A common embassy sought Constantius: let him give Magnentius his sister Constantia to wife, and himself wed the daughter of Magnentius. Constantius wavered, but rejected the proposals and marched towards Sardica. Vetrario held the pass of Succi — the Iron Gate of later times — but on the arrival of the Emperor gave way before him. In Naissus, or as others say in Sirmium, the two Emperors mounted a rostrum and Constantius harangued the troops, appealing to them to avenge the death of the son of the great Constantine. The army hailed Constantius alone as Augustus and Vetrario sought for pardon. The Emperor treated the usurper with great respect and accorded him on his retirement to Prusa in Bithynia a handsome pension until his death six years later. Such is the story, but it can hardly fail to arouse suspicion. The greatest blot on the character of Constantius is his ferocity when once he fancied his superiority threatened, and here was both treason and treachery, for power had been stolen from him by a trick. All difficulties are removed if Vetrario throughout never ceased to support Constantius, even though the Emperor may have doubted his loyalty for a time when he heard that the prudent general had anticipated any action on the part of Magnentius by himself seizing the key-position, the pass of Succi. It is obvious that their secret was worth keeping: it is ill to play with armies as Constantius and Vetrario had done; while the clemency of an outraged sovereign offered a fair theme to the panegyrists of the Emperor.

Marching against one usurper in the West, Constantius was anxious to secure the East to the dynasty of Constantine: the recent success of Lucillianus may have appeared dangerously complete. The Emperor's nephew Gallus had, it would seem, for some time followed the Court, and while at Sirmium Constantius determined to create him Caesar. At the same time (15 March 351) his name was changed into Flavius Claudius Constantius, he was married to Constantia and became *frater Augusti*, forthwith the prince and his wife started for Antioch. Meanwhile Magnentius had not been idle; he had raised huge sums of money in Gaul, while Franks, Saxons, and Germans trooped to the support of their fellow-countryman, whose army now outnumbered that of Constantius. The latter however took the offensive in the spring of 351 and uniting Vetrario's troops with his own marched towards the Alpine passes. An ambush of Magnentius posted in the defiles of Atrans inflicted severe loss on his advance guard and the Emperor was compelled to withdraw. Elated by this success, the usurper now occupied Pannonia and passing Poetovio made for Sirmium.

Throughout his reign the policy of Constantius was marked by an anxious desire to husband the military forces of the Empire, and even now he was ready to compromise and to avoid the fearful struggle between the armies of Gaul and Illyricum. He dispatched Philippus, offering to acknowledge Magnentius as co-Augustus in the West, if he would abandon any claim to Italy. The ambassador was detained, but his proposals after some delay rejected; the usurper was so certain of victory that his envoy the Senator Titianus could even counsel Constantius to abdicate. An attack of Magnentius on Siscia was repulsed and an effort to cross the Save was also unsuccessful. Constantius then retired, preferring to await the enemy in open country where he could turn to the best advantage his superiority in cavalry. At Cibalae the army took up an entrenched position, while Magnentius advanced on Sirmium, hoping to meet with no resistance. Foiled in this he marched to Mursa in the rear of Constantius' army. The latter was forced to relieve the town and here on 28 September the decisive battle was fought. Behind Constantius flowed the Danube and on his right the Drave: for him flight must mean destruction. On both wings he posted mounted archers and in the forefront the mailed cavalry (*cataphracti*) which he had himself raised after the Persian model; in the centre the heavy armed infantry were stationed and in the rear the bowmen and slingers. Before the struggle Silvanus with his horsemen deserted Magnentius. From late afternoon till far into the night the battle raged; the cavalry of Constantius routed the enemy's right wing and this drew the whole line into confusion. Magnentius fled but Marcellinus continued the fight; the Gauls refused to acknowledge defeat; some few escaped through the darkness, but thousands were driven into the river or cut down upon the plain. It is said that Magnentius lost 24,000 men, Constantius 30,000.¹ The usurper took refuge in Aquileia and garrisoned the passes of the Alps; although his overtures were rejected and though his schemes to murder the Caesar Gallus and thus to raise difficulties for Constantius in the East were foiled, yet the exhaustion of his enemies and the approach of winter made pursuit impossible. Constantius forthwith proclaimed an amnesty for all the adherents of Magnentius except only those immediately implicated in his brother's murder; many deserted the pretender and escaped by sea to the victor. In the following year (352), Constantius forced the passes of the Julian Alps, while his fleet dominated the Po, Sicily, and Africa. At the news Magnentius fled to Gaul and by November the Emperor was already in Milan, abrogating all the fugitive's measures. In 353 Constantius crossed the Cottian Alps and at length, three years and a half after his assumption of the purple, Magnentius was surrounded in Lyons by his own troops, and finding his

¹ Zonaras states that Constantius had 80,000 men, Magnentius 36,000. Seeck has suggested that at this time Magnentius may have been besieging Sirmium.

cause hopeless committed suicide, while his Caesar Decentius also perished by his own hand.

The importance and significance of this unsuccessful bid for empire may easily be overlooked. A Roman civil official at the head of some discontented spirits at the Court hatches a plot against his sovereign, and in order to win the support of the army alienated by the contempt of Constans induces a barbarian general to declare himself Emperor. But though the Roman world was willing enough that Germans should fight the Empire's battles in their defence, they were not prepared to see another Maximin upon the throne; they refused to be reconciled to Magnentius even by the admitted justice of his rule. The lesson of his failure was well learned: the barbarian Arbogast caused not himself but the Roman civilian Eugenius to be elected Emperor. Further, while in this struggle the eastern and western halves of the Empire are seen falling naturally and almost unconsciously asunder, the most powerful force working for unity is the dynastic sentiment: Constantius claims support as the legitimate successor of the house of Constantine and as the avenger of the death of his son. His claim is not merely as the chosen of senate or army but far more as the rightful heir to the throne. This struggle throws into prominence the growth of the hereditary principle and the warmth of the response which it could evoke from the sympathies of the subjects of the Empire. No student of the history of the fourth century can indeed afford to neglect the battle of Mursa; contemporaries were staggered at the appalling loss of life, for while it is said that the Roman dead numbered 40,000 at Hadrianople (A.D. 378), at Mursa 54,000 are reported to have been slain. It is hardly too much to say that the defence of the Empire in the East was crippled by this blow, and it must have been largely through the slaughter at Mursa that Constantius was forced to make his fatal demand that the troops of Gaul should march against Persia. Neither must the military significance of the battle be forgotten: it lies in the fact that this was the first victory of the newly formed heavy cavalry, and the result of the impact of their charge, which carried all before it, showed that it was no longer the legionary who was to play the most important part in the campaigns of the future.

Meanwhile in Antioch Gallus was ruling as an oriental despot; there was in his nature a strain of savagery, and his appointment as Caesar seems to have awakened within him a brutal lust for a naked display of unrestrained authority. His passions were only fed by the violence of Constantia. The unsuccessful plot of Magnentius to assassinate the Caesar aroused the latter's suspicions and a reign of terror began; judicial procedure was disregarded and informers honoured, men were condemned to death without trial and the members of the city council imprisoned; when the populace complained of scarcity it was suggested that the responsibility lay with Theophilus governor of Syria: the mob

took the hint and the governor perished. The feeling of insecurity was rendered more intense by a rising among the Jews, who declared a certain Patricius their King, and by the raids of Saracens and Isaurians upon the country-side. The loyalty of the East was jeopardised. The reports of Thalassius, the praetorian praefect, and of Barbatio, the Caesar's Count of the guard, at length moved Constantius to action. On the death of Thalassius (winter 353-4) Domitian was sent to Antioch as his successor, directions being given him that Gallus was to be persuaded to visit the Emperor in the West. The praefect's studied courtesy and overbearing behaviour enraged the Caesar; Domitian was thrown into prison and the populace responding to the appeal of Gallus tore in pieces both the praefect and Montius the quaestor of the palace. The trials for treason which followed were but a parody of justice; fear and hate held sway in Antioch. Constantius himself now wrote to Gallus praying his presence in Milan. In deep foreboding the Caesar started; on his journey the death of his wife, the Emperor's masterful sister, further dismayed him, and after passing through Constantinople his guard of honour became his gaolers; stripped of his purple by Barbatio in Poetovio, he was brought near Pola before a commission headed by Eusebius, the Emperor's chamberlain, and bidden to account for his administration in the East. The Court came to the required conclusion, and Gallus was beheaded.

Thus of the house of Constantine there only remained the Emperor's cousin Julian. Born in all probability in April 332, the child spent his early years in Constantinople; his mother Basilina, daughter of the praetorian praefect Anicius Julianus, died only a few months after the birth of her son, while his father Julius Constantius, younger brother of Constantine the Great, perished in the massacre of 337. From this Julian was spared by his extreme youth and was thereupon removed to Nicomedia and entrusted to the charge of a distant relative, by name Eusebius, who was at the time bishop of the city. When seven years of age, his education was undertaken by Mardonius, a "Scythian" eunuch—perhaps a Goth—who had been engaged by Julian's grandfather to instruct Basilina in the works of Homer and Hesiod. Mardonius had a passionate love for the classical authors, and on his way to school the boy's imagination was fired by the old man's enthusiasm. Already Julian's love for nature was aroused; in the summer he would spend his time on a small estate which had belonged to his grandmother; it lay eight stades from the coast and contained springs and trees with a garden. Here, free from crowds, he would read a book in peace, looking up now and again upon the ships and the sea, while from a knoll, he tells us, there was a wide view over the town below and thence beyond to the capital, the Propontis and the distant islands. Suddenly (in 341?) both he and his brother Gallus were banished to Marcellum, a large and lonely imperial castle in Cappadocia, lying at the foot of Mount Argaeus.

Here for six years the two boys lived in seclusion, for none of their friends were allowed to visit them. Julian chafed bitterly at this isolation : in one of his rare references to this period he writes "we might have been in a Persian prison with only slaves for our companions." For a time the suspicions of Constantius seem to have gained the upper hand. At length Julian was allowed to visit his birthplace Constantinople. Here, while studying under Christian teachers as a citizen among citizens, his natural capacity, wit, and sociability rendered him dangerously popular : it was rumoured that men were beginning to look upon the young prince as Constantius' successor. He was bidden to return to Nicomedia (349 ?), where he studied philosophy and came under the influence of Libanius, although he was not allowed to attend the latter's lectures. The rhetorician dates Julian's conversion to Neoplatonism from this period :—"the mud-bespattered statues of the gods were set up in the great temple of Julian's soul." At last, in 351, when Gallus was created Caesar, the student was free to go where he would, and the Pagan philosophers of Asia Minor seized their opportunity. One and all plotted to secure the complete conversion of the young prince. Aedesius and Eusebius at Pergamum, Maximus and Chrysanthius at Ephesus could hardly content Julian's hunger for the forbidden knowledge. It was at this time (351-2) when he was twenty years of age (as he himself tells us) that he finally rejected Christianity and was initiated into the mysteries of Mithras. The fall of Gallus, however, implicated the Caesar's brother and Julian was closely watched and conducted to Italy. For seven months he was kept under guard, and during the six months which he spent in Milan he had only one interview with Constantius which was secured through the efforts of the Empress Eusebia. When at length he was allowed to leave the Court and was on his way to Asia Minor, the trial of the tribune Marinus and of Africanus, governor of Pannonia Secunda, on a charge of high treason inspired Constantius with fresh fears and suspicions. Messages reached Julian ordering his return. But before his arrival at Milan Eusebia had won from the Emperor his permission for Julian to retire to Athens, love of study being a characteristic which might with safety be encouraged in members of the royal house. Men may have seen in this visit to Greece (355) but a banishment ; to Julian, nursing the perilous secret of his new-found faith, the change must have been pure joy. In Hellas, his true fatherland, he was probably initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries, while he plunged with impetuous intensity into the life of the University. It was not to be for long, for he was soon recalled to sterner activities.

Since the death of Gallus, the Emperor had stood alone ; although no longer compromised by the excesses of his Caesar, he was still beset by the old problems which appeared to defy solution. At this time the power of the central government in Gaul had been still further weakened. Here Silvanus, whose timely desertion of Magnentius had contributed to

the Emperor's success at the battle of Mursa, had been appointed *magister peditum*. He had won some victories over the Alemanni but, driven into treason by Court intrigues, had assumed the purple in Cologne and fallen after a short reign of some 28 days a victim to treachery (August-September 355?). In his own person Constantius could not take the command at once in Rhaetia and in Gaul, and yet along the whole northern frontier he was faced with danger and difficulty. He was haunted by the continual fear that some capable general might of his own motion proclaim himself Augustus, or like Silvanus be hounded into rebellion. A military triumph often advantaged the captain more than his master and might have but little influence towards kindling anew the allegiance of the provincials. A prince of the royal house could alone with any hope of success attempt to raise the imperial prestige in Gaul. It was thus statecraft and no sinister machination against his cousin's life which led Constantius to listen to his wife's entreaties. He determined to banish suspicion and disregard the interested insinuations of the Court eunuchs: he would make of the philosopher scholar a Caesar, in whose person the loyalty of the West should find a rallying-point and on whom its devotion might be spent. In the Emperor's absence Julian once more arrived in Milan (summer 355), but to him imperial favour seemed a thing more terrible than royal neglect; Eusebia's summons to be of good courage was of no avail, only the thought that this was the will of Heaven steeled his purpose. Who was he to fight against the Gods?—After some weeks on 6 November 355 Julian was clothed with the purple by Constantius and enthusiastically acclaimed as Caesar by the army. Before leaving the Court the Caesar married Helena, the youngest sister of Constantius; the union was dictated by policy and she would seem never to have taken any large place in the life or thought of Julian. The position of affairs in Gaul was critical. Magnentius had withdrawn the armies of the West to meet Constantius, and horde after horde of barbarians had swept across the Rhine. In the north the Salii had taken possession of what is now the province of Brabant; in the south the Alemanni under Chnodomar had defeated the Caesar Decentius and had ravaged the heart of Gaul. The rumour ran that Constantius had even freed the Alemanni from their oaths and had given them a bribe to induce them to invade Roman territory, allowing them to take for their own any land which their swords could win. The story is probably a fabrication of Julian and his friends, but the fact of the barbarian invasion cannot be doubted. In the spring of 354 Constantius crossed the Jura and marched to the neighbourhood of Basel, but the Alemanni under Gundomad and Vadomar withdrew and a peace was concluded. In 355 Arbitio was defeated near the Lake of Constance and the fall of Silvanus had for its immediate consequence the capture of Cologne by the Franks. Forty-five towns, not to speak of lesser posts, had been laid waste and

the valley of the Rhine was lost to the Romans. Three hundred stades, from the left bank of the river the barbarians were permanently settled and their ravages extended for three times that distance. The whole of Elsass was in the hands of the Alemanni, the heads of the municipalities had been carried into slavery, Strassburg, Brumath, Worms, and Mainz had fallen, while soldiers of Magnentius, who had feared to surrender themselves after their leader's death, roamed as brigands through the country-side and increased the general disorder. On 1 December 355, Julian left Milan with a guard of 360 soldiers; in Turin he learnt of the fall of Cologne and thence advanced to Vienne where he spent the winter training with ruseful energy for his new vocation of a soldier. For the following year a combined scheme of operations had been projected: while the Emperor advancing from Rhaetia attacked the barbarians in their own territory, Julian was to act as lieutenant to Marcellus with directions to guard the approaches into Gaul and to drive back any fugitives who sought to escape before Constantius. The neutrality of the Alemannic princes in the north had been secured in 354, while internal dissension among the German tribes favoured the Emperor's plans. The army in Gaul was ordered to assemble at Rheims and Julian accordingly marched from Vienne, reaching Autun on 24 June. That the barbarians should have constantly harried the Caesar's soldiers as they advanced through Auxerre and Troyes only serves to show how completely Gaul had been flooded by the German tribesmen. From Rheims, where the scattered troops were concentrated, the army started for Elsass pursuing the most direct route by Metz and Dieuze to Zabern. Two legions of the rear-guard were surprised on the march and were only with difficulty saved from annihilation. At this time Constantius was doubtless advancing upon the right bank of the Rhine, for Julian at Brumath drove back a body of the Alemanni who were seeking refuge in Gaul. The Caesar then marched by Coblenz through the desolated Rhine valley to Cologne. This city he recovered and concluded a peace with the Franks. The approach of winter brought the operations to a close and Julian retired to Sens. Food was scarce and it was difficult to provision the army; the Caesar's best troops—the Scutarii and Gentiles—were therefore stationed in scattered fortresses. The Alemanni had been driven by hunger to continue their raids through Gaul and hearing of the weakness of the garrison they suddenly swept down upon Sens. In his heroic defence of the town Julian won his spurs as a military commander. For thirty days he withstood the attack, until the Alemanni retired discomfited. Marcellus had probably already experienced the ambition and vanity of the Caesar, his independence and intolerance of criticism: an imperial prince was none too agreeable a lieutenant. The general may even have considered that the Emperor would not be deeply grieved if the fortune of war removed a possible menace to the throne. Whatever his reasons may have been, he

treacherously failed to come to the relief of the besieged. When the news reached the Court he was recalled and deprived of his command. Eutherius, sent by Julian from Gaul, discredited the calumnies of Marcellus, and Constantius silenced the malignant whispers of the Court; accepting his Caesar's protestations of loyalty, he created him supreme commander over the troops in Gaul. The actual gains won by the military operations of the year 356 may not have been great but that their moral effect was considerable is demonstrated by the campaign of 357 and by the spirit of the troops at the battle of Strassburg; above all, Julian was no longer an imperial figure-head, he now begins an independent career as general and administrator.

In the spring of 357 Constantius, wishing to celebrate with high pomp and ceremony the twentieth year of his rule since the death of Constantine, visited Rome for the first time (28 April-29 May). The city filled him with awe and wonder and he caused an obelisk to be raised in the Circus Maximus as a memorial of his stay in the capital. But to the historian the main interest of this visit lies in the fact that as a Christian Emperor Constantius removed from the Senate-house the altar of Victory.¹ To the whole-hearted Pagans this altar came to stand for a symbol of the Holy Roman Empire as they conceived it: it was an outward and visible sign of that bond which none might loose between Rome's hard-won greatness as a conquering nation and her loyalty to her historic faith. They clung to it with passionate devotion as to a time-honoured creed in stone—a creed at once political and religious—and thus again and again they struggled and pleaded for its retention or its restoration. The deeper meaning of what might seem a matter of trifling import must never be forgotten if we are to understand the earnest petition of Symmachus or the scorn of Ambrose. The Pagan was defending the last trench: the destruction of the altar of Victory meant for him that he could hold the fortress no longer.

From Rome the Emperor was summoned to the Danube to take action against the Sarmatians, Suevi, and Quadi; he was unable to co-operate with Julian in person, but dispatched Barbatio, *magister peditum*, to Gaul in command of 25,000 troops. Julian was to march from the north, Barbatio was to make Augst near Basel his base of operations, and between the two forces the barbarians were to be enclosed. The choice of a general, however, foredoomed the plan of campaign to failure. Barbatio, one of the principal agents in the death of Gallus, was the last man to work in harmony with Julian. The Caesar leaving Sens concentrated his forces only 13,000 strong at Rheims, and as in the previous year marched south to Elsass. Finding the pass of Zabern blocked, he drove the barbarians before him and forced them to take refuge in the islands of the Rhine. Barbatio had previously allowed a marauding band of Laeti laden with booty to pass his camp and to cross the Rhine

¹ Symm. *Rel.* III. 6.

unscathed, and later by false reports he secured the dismissal of the tribunes Bainobaudes and the future emperor Valentinian, whom Julian had ordered to dispute the robbers' return. He now refused to supply the Caesar with boats; light-armed troops, however, waded across the Rhine to the islands and seizing the barbarians' canoes massacred the fugitives. After this success Julian fortified the pass of Zabern and thus closed the gate into Gaul; he settled garrisons in Elsass along the frontier line and did all in his power to supply them with provisions, for Barbatio withheld all the supplies which arrived from southern Gaul. Having now secured his position, Julian received the amazing intelligence that Barbatio had been surprised by the Germans, had lost his whole baggage train and had retreated in confusion to Augst, where he had gone into winter quarters. It must be confessed that this defeat of 25,000 men by a sudden barbarian foray seems almost inexplicable, unless it be that Barbatio was determined at all costs to refuse in any way to co-operate with the Caesar and was surprised while on the march to Augst. Julian's position was one of great danger: the Emperor was far distant on the Danube, the Alemanni previously at variance among themselves, were now re-united, Gundomad, the faithful ally of Rome, had been treacherously murdered and the followers of Vadomar had joined their fellow-countrymen. Barbatio's defeat had raised the enemy's hopes, while Julian was unsupported and had only some 13,000 men under his command. It was at this critical moment that a host of Alemannic tribesmen crossed the Rhine under the leadership of Chnodomar and encamped, it would seem, on the left bank of the river, close to the city of Strassburg which the Romans had apparently not yet recovered. On the third day after the passage of the stream had begun, Julian learned of the movement of the barbarians, and set out from Zabern on the military road to Brumath, and thence on the highway which ran from Strassburg to Mainz towards Weitbruch; here after a march of six or seven hours the army would reach the frontier fortification and from this point they had to descend by rough and unknown paths into the plain. On sight of the enemy despite the counsels of the Caesar, despite their long march and the burning heat of an August day, the troops insisted on an immediate attack. The Roman army was drawn up for battle, Severus on rising ground on the left wing, Julian in command of the cavalry on the right wing in the plain. Severus from this point of vantage discovered an ambush and drove off the barbarians with loss, but the Alemanni in their turn routed the Roman horse; although Julian was successful in staying their flight, they were too demoralised to renew the conflict. The whole brunt of the attack was therefore borne by the Roman centre and left wing, and it was a struggle of footmen against footmen. At length the stubborn endurance of the Roman infantry carried the day, and the Alemanni were driven headlong backwards toward the Rhine. Their losses were enormous — 6000 left dead on the field of battle and

countless others drowned : Chnodomar was at last captured, and Julian sent the redoubtable chieftain as a prisoner to Constantius. The victory meant the recovery of the upper Rhine and the freeing of Gaul from barbarian incursions. There would even seem to have been an attempt after the battle to hail Julian as Augustus, but this he immediately repressed. The booty and captives were sent to Metz and the Caesar himself marched to Mainz, being compelled to subdue a mutiny on the way ; the army had apparently been disappointed in its share of the spoil. Julian at once proceeded to cross the Rhine opposite Mainz and to conduct a campaign on the Main. His aim would seem to have been to strike still deeper terror into the vanquished, and to secure his advantage in order that he might feel free to turn to the work which awaited him in the north. Three chieftains sued for peace after their land had been laid waste with fire and sword, and to seal this success Julian rebuilt a fortress which Trajan had constructed on the right bank of the Rhine. The great difficulty which faced the Caesar was the question of supplies, and one of the terms of the ten months' armistice granted to the Alemanni was that they should furnish the garrison of the *Munitum Trajanum* with provisions. It was this pressing necessity which demanded both an assertion of the power of Rome among the peoples dwelling about the mouths of the Meuse and Rhine, and also the re-establishment of the regular transport of corn from Britain. During the campaign on the Main, Severus had been sent north to reconnoitre ; the Franks now occupied a position of virtual independence in the district south of the Meuse, and in the absence of Roman garrisons and with the Caesar fully occupied by the operations against the Alemanni a troop of 600 Frankish warriors were devastating the country-side. They retired before Severus and occupied two deserted fortresses. Here for 54 days in December 357 and January 358 they were besieged by Julian who had marched north to support the *magister equitum*. Hunger compelled them at last to yield, for the relief sent by their fellow-tribesmen arrived too late. Julian spent the winter in Paris, and in early summer advanced with great speed and secrecy, surprised the Franks in Toxandria and forced them to acknowledge Roman supremacy. Further north the Chamavi had been driven by the pressure of the Saxons in their rear to cross the Rhine and to take possession of the country between that river and the Meuse. The co-operation of Severus enabled Julian to force them to submission, and it would appear that in consequence they retired to their former homes on the Yssel. The lower Rhine was now once more in Roman hands ; the generalship of Julian had achieved what the praefect Florentius had deemed that Roman gold could alone secure, and the building of a fleet of 400 sea-going vessels was at once begun. The lower Rhine secured, Julian forthwith (July-August) returned to his unfinished task in the south. It was imperative that the ravaged provinces of Gaul should be repeopled : their desolation and the honour of

the Empire alike demanded that the prisoners in the hands of the barbarians should be restored. The remorseless ravaging of his land compelled Hortarius to yield, to surrender his Roman captives and to furnish timber for the rebuilding of the Roman towns. The winter past, Julian once more left Paris and with his new fleet brought the corn of Britain to the garrisons of the Rhine. Seven fortresses, from Castra Herculis in the land of the Batavi to Bingen in the south, were reconstructed, and then in a last campaign against the most southerly tribes of the Alemanni, those chieftains who had taken a leading part in the battle of Strassburg were forced to tender their submission. It was no easy matter to secure the release of the Roman prisoners, but Julian could claim to have restored 20,000 of these unfortunates to their homes. The Caesar's work was done: Gaul was once more in peace and the Rhine the frontier of the Empire.

When we turn to Julian's action in the civil affairs of the West, our information is all too scanty. It is clear that he approached his task with the passionate conviction that at all costs he would relieve the lot of the oppressed provincials. He took part in person in the administration of justice and himself revised the judgments of provincial governors; he refused to grant "indulgences" whereby arrears of taxation were remitted, for he well knew that these imperial acts of grace benefited the rich alone, for wealth when first the tribute was assessed could purchase the privilege of delay and thus in the end enjoy the relief of the general rebate. He resolutely opposed all extraordinary burdens, and when Florentius persistently urged him to sign a paper imposing additional taxation for war purposes he threw the document indignantly to the ground and all the remonstrances of the praefect were without avail. In Belgica the Caesar's own representatives collected the tribute and the inhabitants were saved from the exactions alike of the agents of the praefect and of the governor. So successful was his administration that where previously for the land-tax alone twenty-five aurei had been exacted seven aurei only were now demanded by the State. But reform was slow and in Julian's character there was a strain of restless impatience: he was intolerant of delays and of the irrational obstacles that barred the highway of progress; it galled him that he could not appoint as officials and subordinates men after his own heart. Admitted that Constantius sent him capable civil servants, yet these men who were to be the agents of reform were themselves members of the corrupt bureaucracy which was ruining the provinces. Indeed, might these nominees of his cousin be withheld? The undefined limits of his office might always render it an open question whether the assertion of the Caesar's right were not aggression upon imperial privilege. Julian's conscious power and burning enthusiasm felt the cruel curb of his subordination. Constantius wished loyally to support his young relative, had given him the supreme command in Gaul after the first trial year and was determined that he

should be supported by experienced generals, but Julian was far distant and his enemies at Court had the Emperor's ear; for them his successes and virtues but rendered him the more dangerous; the eunuch gang, says Ammianus, only worked the harder at the smithies where calumnies were forged. At times they mocked the Caesar's vanity and decried his conquests, at others they played upon the suspicions of Constantius: Julian was victor to-day, why not another Victorinus — an upstart Emperor of Gaul — to-morrow. Imperial messengers to the West were careful to bring back ominous reports, and Julian, who knew how matters stood and was not ignorant of his cousin's failings, may well have feared the overmastering influence of the Emperor's advisers. Thus constantly checked in his plans of reform alike religious and political, already, it may be, hailed as Augustus by his soldiery and dreading the machinations of courtiers, he began, at first perhaps in spite of himself, to long for greater independence; in 359 he was dreaming of the time when he should be no longer Caesar. The war in the East gave him his opportunity.

While Julian had been recovering Gaul, Constantius had been engaged in a series of campaigns on the Danube frontier, and for this purpose had removed his court from Milan to Sirmium. An unimportant expedition against the Suevi in Rhaetia in 357 was followed in 358 by lengthy operations in the plains about the Danube and the Theiss against the Quadi and various Sarmatian tribes who had burst plundering across the border. The barbarian territory was ravaged, and through the Emperor's successful diplomacy one people after another submitted and surrendered their prisoners. They were in most cases left in possession of their lands under the supremacy of Rome, but the Limigantes were forced to settle on the left instead of the right bank of the Theiss, while the Sarmatae Liberi were given a king by Constantius in the person of their native prince Zizais, and were themselves restored to the district which the Limigantes had been compelled to leave. The latter however in the following year (359), discontented with their new homes, craved that they might be allowed to cross the Danube and settle within the Empire. This Constantius was persuaded to permit, hoping thus to gain recruits for the Roman army and thereby to lighten the burdens of the provincials. The Limigantes, once admitted upon Roman territory, sought to avenge themselves for the losses of the previous year by a treacherous onslaught upon the Emperor. Constantius escaped and a general massacre of the faithless barbarians ensued. The pacification of the northern frontier was now complete.

Meanwhile in the East hostilities with Persia had ceased on any large scale since 351, and in 356-7 the praefect Musonianus had been carrying on negotiations for peace (through Cassianus, military commander in Mesopotamia) with Tampsapor a neighbouring satrap. But the moment was inopportune. Sapor himself had at length effected an alliance with the Chionitae and Gelani and now (spring 358) in a letter to the Emperor

demanded the restoration of Mesopotamia and Armenia; in case of refusal he threatened military action in the following year. Constantius proudly rejected the shameful proposal, but sent two successive embassies to Persia in the hope of concluding an honourable peace. The effort was fruitless. Court intrigue deprived Ursicinus, Rome's one really capable general in the East, of the supreme command, and in spite of the prayers of the provincials he was succeeded by Sabinianus, who in his obscure old age was distinguished only by his wealth, inefficiency and credulous piety. During the entire course of the war inactivity was the one prominent feature of his generalship. On the outbreak of hostilities in 359 the Persians adopted a new plan of campaign. A rich Syrian, Antoninus by name, who had served on the staff of the general commanding in Mesopotamia, was threatened by powerful enemies with ruin. Having compiled from official sources full information alike as to Rome's available ammunition and stores and the number of her troops he fled with his family to the court of Sapor; here, welcomed and trusted, he counselled immediate action: men had been withdrawn from the East for the campaigns on the Danube, let the King no longer be content with frontier forays, let him without warning strike for the rich province of Syria unravaged since the days of Gallienus! The deserter's advice was adopted by the Persians. On the advance of their army, however, the Romans, withdrawing from Charrae and the open country-side burned down all vegetation over the whole of northern Mesopotamia. This devastation and the swollen stream of the Euphrates forced the Persians to strike northward through Sophene; Sapor crossed the river higher in its course and marched towards Amida. The city refused to surrender, and the death of the son of Grumbates, king of the Chionitae, provoked Sapor to abandon his attack on Syria and to press the siege. Six legions formed the standing garrison, a force which probably numbered some 6000 men in all. But at the time of the Persian advance the country-folk had all assembled for the yearly market, and when the peasantry fled for refuge within the city walls Amida was densely overcrowded. None however dreamed of surrender; Ammianus, one of the besieged, has left us a vivid account of those heroic seventy-three days. In the end the city fell (6 Oct.) and its inhabitants were either slain or carried into captivity. Winter was now approaching and Sapor was forced to return to Persia with the loss of 30,000 men.

The sacrifice of Amida had saved the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, but the fall of the city also convinced Constantius that more troops were needed if Rome was to withstand the enemy. Accordingly the Emperor sent by the tribune Decentius his momentous order that the auxiliary troops, the Aeruli Batavi Celtae and Petulantes, should leave Gaul forthwith, and with them 300 men from each of the remaining Gallic regiments. The demand reached Julian in Paris where he was spending the winter (January ? 360); for him the serious feature of the

despatch was that the execution of the Emperor's command was entrusted to Lupicinus and Gintonius,¹ while Julian himself was ignored. The transference of the troops was probably an imperial necessity, but this could not justify the form of the Emperor's despatch. The unrelenting malice of the courtiers had carried the day; Constantius seems to have lost confidence in his Caesar. At first Julian thought to lay down his office, then he temporised: he professed that obedience to the Emperor would imperil the safety of the province, he raised the objection that the barbarians had enlisted on the understanding that they should never be called upon to serve beyond the Alps, Lupicinus was in Britain fighting the Picts and Scots, while Florentius, to whose influence rumour ascribed the Emperor's action, was absent in Vienne. Julian summoned him to Paris to give his advice, but the praefect pleaded the urgency of the supervision of the corn supply and remained where he was. While Julian played a waiting game, a timely broadsheet was found in the camp of the Celtae and Petulantes. The anonymous author complained that the soldiers were being dragged none knew whither, leaving their families to be captured by the Alemanni. The partisans of Constantius saw the danger; should Julian still delay, they insisted, he would but justify the Emperor's suspicions. His hand was forced; he wrote a letter to Constantius, ordered the soldiers to leave their winter quarters and gave permission for their families to accompany them; Sintula, the Caesar's tribune of the stable, at once set out for the East with a picked body of Gentiles and Scutarii. Unwisely, as events proved, the court party demanded that the troops should march through Paris: there, they thought, any disaffection could be repressed. Julian met the men outside the city and spoke them fair, their officers he invited to a banquet in the evening. But when the guests had returned to their quarters, there suddenly arose in the camp a passionate shout, and crowding tumultuously to the palace the soldiers surrounded its walls, raising the fateful acclamation, "Julianus Augustus." Without the army clamoured, within his room its leader wrestled with the gods until the dawn, and with the break of a new day he was assured of Heaven's blessing. When he came forth to face his men he might attempt to dissuade them, but he knew that he would bow to their will. Raised upon a shield and crowned with a standard bearer's torque, the Caesar returned to his palace an Emperor. But now that the irrevocable step was taken, his resolution seemed to have failed, and he remained in retirement—perhaps for some days. The adherents of Constantius took heart and a group of conspirators plotted against Julian's life. But the secret was not kept, and the soldiers once more encircled the palace and would not be contented until they had seen their Emperor alive and well. From this moment Julian stifled his scruples and accepted accomplished fact. After the flight of Decentius and Florentius he despatched Eutherius

¹ Or Sintula. Amm. xx. 4 8

and his *magister officiorum* Pentadius as ambassadors to Constantius, while in his letter he proposed the terms which he was prepared to make the basis of a compromise. He would send to the East troops raised from the *dediticii* and the Germans settled on the left bank of the Rhine — to withdraw the Gallic troops would be, he professed, to endanger the safety of the province — while Constantius should allow him to appoint his own officials, both military and civil, save only that the nomination of the praetorian praefect should rest with the elder Augustus, whose superior authority Julian avowed himself willing to acknowledge. When the news from Paris reached Caesarea, Constantius hesitated: should he march forthwith against his rebellious Caesar and desert the East while the Persians were threatening to renew the attack of the previous year, or should he subordinate his personal quarrel to the interests of the State? Loyalty to his conception of an Emperor's duty carried the day and he advanced to Edessa. The fact that the Persians in this year were able to recover Singara, once more fallen into Roman hands, and to capture and garrison Bezabdê, a fortress on the Tigris in Zabdicene, while the Emperor remained perforce inactive, serves to show how very earnest was his need of troops. Even the attempt to recover Bezabdê in the autumn was unsuccessful. Meanwhile Constantius, ignoring Julian's proposals, made several nominations to high officers in the West, and despatched Leonas to bid the rebel lay aside the purple with which a turbulent soldiery had invested him. The letter, when read to the troops, served but to inflame their enthusiasm for their general, and Leonas fled for his life. But Julian still hoped that an understanding between himself and Constantius was even now not impossible. To save his army from inaction he led them — not towards the East, but against the Attuanian Franks on the lower Rhine. The barbarians, unwarmed of the Roman approach, were easily defeated and peace was granted on their submission. The campaign lasted three months, and thence by Basel and Besançon Julian returned to winter at Vienne, for Paris, his beloved Lutetia, lay at too great a distance from Asia. Letters were still passing between himself and Constantius, but his task lay clear before him: he must be forearmed alike for aggression and defence. By a display of power he sought to wrest from his cousin recognition and acknowledgment, while, with his troops about him, he could at least sustain his cause and escape the shame of his brother's fate. Recruits from the barbarian tribes swelled his forces, and large sums of money were raised for the coming campaign. In the spring of 361 Julian by the treacherous capture and banishment of Vadomar removed all fears of an invasion by the Alemanni, and about the month of July set out from Basel for the East. By this step he took the aggressive and himself finally broke off the negotiations; this was avowed by his appointment of a praefect of Gaul in place of Nebridius, the nominee of Constantius, who had refused to take the oath of allegiance.

to Julian. Germanianus temporarily performed the praefect's duties but retired in favour of Sallust, while Nevitta was created *magister armorum* and Jovius *quaestor*.

As soon as he was freed from the Persian War, Constantius had thought to hunt down his usurping Caesar and capture his prey while Julian was still in Gaul; he had set guards about the frontiers and had stored corn on the Lake of Constance and in the neighbourhood of the Cottian Alps. Julian determined that he would not wait to be surrounded, but would strike the first blow, while the greater part of the army of Illyricum was still in Asia. He argued that present daring might deliver Sirmium into his hands, that thereupon he could seize the Pass of Succi, and thus be master of the road to the West. Jovius and Jovinus were ordered to advance at full speed through North Italy, in command, it would appear, of a squadron of cavalry. They would thus surprise the inhabitants into submission, while fear of the main army, which would follow more slowly, might overawe opposition. Nevitta he commanded to make his way through Rhaetia Mediterranea, while he himself left Basel with but a small escort and struck direct through the Black Forest for the Danube. Here he seized the vessels of the river fleet, and at once embarked his men. Without rest or intermission Julian continued the voyage down the river, and reached Bononia on the eleventh day. Under the cover of night, Dagalaiphus with some picked followers was despatched to Sirmium. At dawn his troop was demanding admission in the Emperor's name; only when too late was the discovery made that the Emperor was not Constantius. The general Lucilianus, who had already begun the leisurely concentration of his men for an advance into Gaul, was rudely aroused from sleep and hurried away to Bononia. The gates of Sirmium, the northern capital of the Empire, were opened and the inhabitants poured forth to greet the victor of Strassburg. Two days only did Julian spend in the city, then marched to Succi,¹ left Nevitta to guard the pass and retired to Naissus, where he spent the winter awaiting the arrival of his army. Julian's march from Gaul meant the final breach with Constantius; his present task was to justify his usurpation to the world. Thus the imperial pamphleteer was born. One apologia followed another, now addressed to the senate, now to Athens as representing the historic centre of Hellenism, now to some city whose allegiance Julian sought to win. But he overshot the mark; the painting of the character of Constantius men felt to be a caricature and the scandalous portraiture unworthy of one who owed his advancement to his cousin's favours. Meanwhile Julian strained every nerve to raise more troops for the coming campaign. He was not yet strong enough to advance into Thrace to meet the forces under Count Martianus, and the news from the West forced him to realise how critical his position might become.

¹ Now *Kapulu-Derbend*: Bulgarian, *Trajanova Vrata*.

Two legions and a cohort stationed in Sirmium he did not dare to trust and so gave the command that they should march to Gaul to take the place of those regiments which formed part of his own army. On the long journey the men's discontent grew to mutiny: refusing to advance, they occupied Aquileia and were supported by the inhabitants who had remained at heart loyal to Constantius. The danger was very real; the insurgents might form a nucleus of disaffection in Italy and thus imperil Julian's retreat. He gave immediate orders to Jovinus to return and to employ in the siege of Aquileia the whole of the main force now advancing through Italy.

In the East Constantius had marched to Edessa (spring 361), where he awaited information as to the plans of Sapor. It was only on the news of Julian's capture of the pass of Succi that he felt that the war in the West could be no longer postponed. At the same time Constantius learned of Sapor's retreat, since the auspices forbade the passage of the Tigris. The Roman army assembled at Hierapolis greeted the Emperor's harangue with enthusiasm, Arbitio was despatched in advance to bar Julian's progress through Thrace, and when Constantius had made provision in Antioch for the government of the East he started in person against the usurper. Fever however attacked him in Tarsus and his illness was rendered still more serious by the violent storms of late autumn. At Mopsucrenae, in Cilicia, he died on 3 November 361 at the age of 44. Ammianus Marcellinus has given us a definitive sketch of the character of Constantius. His faults are clear as day. To guard the Emperor from treason, Diocletian had made the throne unapproachable, but this severance of sovereign and people drove the ruler back on the narrow circle of his ministers. They were at once his informants and his advisers: their lord learned only that which they deemed it well for him to know. The Emperor was led by his favourites; Constantius possessed considerable influence, writes Ammianus in bitter irony, with his eunuch chamberlain Eusebius. The insinuations of courtiers ultimately sowed mistrust between his Caesar Julian and himself. They played upon the suspicious nature of the Emperor, their whispers of treason fired him to senseless ferocity, and the services of brave men were lost to the Empire lest their popularity should endanger the monarch's peace. Even loyal subjects grew to doubt whether the Emperor's safety were worth its fearful price. To maintain the extravagant pomp of his rapacious ministers and followers, the provinces laboured under an overwhelming weight of taxes and impositions which were exacted with merciless severity, while the public post was ruined by the constant journeyings of bishops from one council to another. Yet though these dark features of the reign of Constantius are undeniable, below his inhuman repression of those who had fallen under the suspicion of treason lay a deep conviction of the solemnity of the trust which had been handed down to him from father and grandfather. For Constantius

the consciousness that he was representative by the grace of Heaven of a hereditary dynasty carried with it its obligation, and the task of maintaining the greatness of Rome was subtly confused with the duty of self-preservation, since a usurper's reign would never be hallowed by the seal of a legitimate succession. With a sense of this responsibility Constantius always sought to appoint only tried men to important offices in the State, he consistently exalted the civil element at the expense of the military and rigidly maintained the separation between the two services which had been one of the leading principles of Diocletian's reforms. Sober and temperate, he possessed that power of physical endurance which was shared by so many of his house. In his early years he served as lieutenant to his father alike in East and West and gained a wide experience of men and cities. Now on this frontier, now on that, he was constantly engaged in the Empire's defence; a soldier by necessity and no born general, he was twice hailed by his men with the title of Sarmaticus, and in the usurpations of Magnentius and of Julian he refused to hazard the safety of the provinces and loyally sacrificed all personal interests in face of the higher claims of his duty to the Roman world. He was naturally cold and self-contained; he fails to awake our affection or our enthusiasm, but we can hardly withhold our tribute of respect. He bore his burden of Empire with high seriousness; men were conscious in his presence of an overmastering dignity and of a majesty which inspired them with something akin to awe.

By the death of Constantius the Empire was happily freed from the horrors of another civil war: Julian was clearly marked out to be his cousin's successor, and the decision of the army did not admit of doubt; Eusebius and the Court party were forced to abandon any idea of putting forward another claimant to the throne. Two officers, Theolaifus and Aligildus, bore the news to Julian; fortune had intervened to favour his rash adventure, and he at once advanced through Thrace by Philippopolis to Constantinople. Agilo was despatched to Aquileia and at length the besieged were convinced of the Emperor's death and thereupon their stubborn resistance came to an end. Nigrinus, the ringleader, and two others were put to death, but soldiers and citizens were fully pardoned. When on 11 December 361 Julian, still but 31 years old, entered as sole Emperor his eastern capital, all eyes were turned in wondering amazement on the youthful hero, and for the rest of his life upon him alone was fixed the gaze of Roman historians; wherever Julian is not, there we are left in darkness, of the West for example we know next to nothing. The history of Julian's reign becomes perforce the biography of the Emperor. In that biography three elements are all-important: Julian's passionate determination to restore the Pagan worship; his earnest desire that men should see a new Marcus Aurelius upon the throne, and that abuses and maladministration should hide their heads ashamed before an Emperor who was also a

philosopher; and, in the last place, his tragic ambition to emulate the achievements of Alexander the Great and by a crushing blow to assert over Persia the pre-eminence of Rome.

Innumerable have been the explanations which men have offered for the apostasy of Julian. They have pointed to his Arian teachers, have suggested that Christianity was hateful to him as the religion of Constantius whom he regarded as his father's murderer, while rationalists have paradoxically claimed that the Emperor's reason refused to accept the miraculous origin and the subtle theologies of the faith. It would be truer to say that Christianity was not miraculous enough — was too rational for the mystic and enthusiast. The religion which had as its central object of adoration the cult of a dead man was to him human, all too human: his vague longings after some vast imaginative conception of the universe felt themselves cabined and confined in the creeds of Christianity. With a Roman's pride and a Roman's loyalty to the past as he conceived it, the upstart faith of despised Galilaean peasants aroused at one moment his scorn, at another his pity: a Greek by education and literary sympathies, the Christian Bible was but a faint and distorted reflex of the masterpieces which had comforted his solitary youth. a mystic who felt the wonder of the expanse of the heavens, with a strain in his nature to which the ritual excesses of the Orient appealed with irresistible fascination, it was easy for him to adopt the speculations of Neoplatonism and to fall a victim to the thaumaturgy of Maximus. The causes of Julian's apostasy lie deep-rooted in the apostate's inmost being.

His first acts declared his policy: he ordered the temples to be opened and the public sacrifices to be revived; but the Christians were to be free to worship, for Julian had learned the lesson of the failure of previous persecutions, and by imperial order all the Catholic bishops banished under Constantius were permitted to return. Those privileges, however, which the State had granted to the churches were now to be withdrawn: lands and temples which had belonged to the older religion were to be surrendered to their owners, the Christian clergy were no longer to claim exemption from the common liability to taxation or from duties owed to the municipal senates. With Julian's accession Christianity had ceased to be the favoured religion, and it was therefore contended that reason demanded alike restitution and equality before the law. Meanwhile a Court was sitting at Chalcedon to try the partisans of Constantius. Its nominal president was Sallust (probably Julian's friend when in Gaul), but the commission was in reality controlled by Arbitio, an unprincipled creature of Constantius. Julian may perhaps have intended to show impartiality by such a choice, but as a result justice was travestied, and though public opinion approved of the deaths of Paul the notary and of Apodemius, who were principally responsible for the excesses committed in the treason trials of the late reign, and may

have welcomed the fate of the all-powerful chamberlain Eusebius, men were horror-struck at the execution of Ursulus, who as treasurer in Gaul had loyally supported Julian when Caesar; his unpopularity with the troops was indeed his only crime, and the Emperor did not mend his error by raising the weak plea that he had been kept in ignorance of the sentence. Julian's next step was the summary dismissal of the horde of minor officials of the palace who had served to make the Court circle under Constantius a very hot-bed of vice and corruption. The purge was sudden and indiscriminate; it was the act of a young man in a hurry. The feverish ardour of the Emperor's reforming energy swept before it alike the innocent and the guilty. Such impatience appeared unworthy of a philosopher, and so far from awaking gratitude in his subjects served rather to arouse discontent and alarm.

But already Julian was burning to undertake his great expedition against Persia, and refused to listen to counsellors who suggested the folly of aggression now that Sapor was no longer pressing the attack. The Emperor's preparations could best be made in Antioch and here he arrived probably in late July 363. On the way he had made a détour to visit Pessinus and Ancyra; the lukewarm devotion of Galatia had discouraged him, but in Antioch where lay the sanctuary of Daphne he looked for earnest support in his crusade for the moral regeneration of Paganism. The Crown of the East (as Ammianus styles his native city) welcomed the Emperor with open arms, but the enthusiasm was short-lived. The populace gay, factious, pleasure-loving, looked for spectacles and the pomp of a Court; Julian's heart was set on a civil and religious reformation. He longed for amendment in law and administration, above all for a remodelling of the old cult and the winning of converts to the cause of the gods. He himself was to be the head of the new state church of Paganism; the hierarchy of the Christians was to be adopted — the country priests subordinated to the high priest of the province, the high priest to be responsible to the Emperor, the pontifex maximus. A new spirit was to inspire the Pagan clergy; the priest himself was to be no longer a mere performer of public rites, let him take up the work of preacher, expound the deeper sense which underlay the old mythology and be at once shepherd of souls and an ensample to his flock in holy living. What Maximin Daza had attempted to achieve in ruder fashion by forged acts of Pilate, Julian's writings against the Galilaeans should effect: as Maximin had bidden cities ask what they would of his royal bounty, did they but petition that the Christians might be removed from their midst, so Julian was ready to assist and favour towns which were loyal to the old faith. Maximin had created a new priesthood recruited from men who had won distinction in public careers. his dream had been to fashion an organisation which might successfully withstand the Christian clergy; here too Julian was his disciple. When pest and famine had desolated the Roman East in

Maximin's days, the helpfulness and liberality of Christians towards the starving and the plague-stricken had forced men to confess that true piety and religion had made their home with the persecuted heretics: it was Julian's will that Paganism should boast its public charity and that an all-embracing service of humanity should be reasserted as a vital part of the ancient creed. If only the worshippers of the gods of Hellas were once quickened with a spiritual enthusiasm, the lost ground would be recovered. It was indeed to this call that Paganism could not respond. There were men who clung to the old belief, but theirs was no longer a victorious faith, for the fire had died upon the altar. Resignation to Christian intolerance was bitter, but the passion which inspires martyrs was nowhere to be found. Julian made converts — the Christian writers mournfully testify to their numbers — but he made them by imperial gold, by promises of advancement or fear of dismissal. They were not the stuff of which missionaries could be fashioned. The citizens were disappointed of their pageants, while the royal enthusiast found his hopes to be illusions. Mutual embitterment was the natural result. Julian was never a persecutor in the accepted meaning of that word: it was the most constant complaint of the Christians that the Emperor denied them the glory of martyrdom, but Pagan mobs knew that the Emperor would not be quick to punish violence inflicted on the Galilaeans: when the Alexandrians brutally murdered their tyrannous bishop, George of Cappadocia, they escaped with an admonition; when Julian wrote to his subjects of Bostra, it was to suggest that their bishop might be hunted from the town. If Pessinus was to receive a boon from the Emperor, his counsel was that all her inhabitants should become worshippers of the Great Mother; if Nisibis needed protection from Persia, it would only be granted on condition that she changed her faith. In the schools throughout the Empire Christians were expounding the works of the great Greek masters; from their earliest years children were taught to scorn the legends which to Julian were rich with spiritual meaning. He that would teach the scriptures must believe in them, and given the Emperor's zealous faith, it was but reasonable that he should prohibit Christians from teaching the classic literature which was his Bible. If Ammianus criticised the edict severely, it was because he did not share the Emperor's belief; the historian was a tolerant monotheist, Julian an ardent worshipper of the gods. The Emperor's conservatism and love of sacrifice alike were stirred by the records of the Jews. A people who in the midst of adversity had clung with a passionate devotion to the adoration of the God of their fathers deserved well at his hands. Christian renegades should see the glories of a restored temple which might stand as an enduring monument of his reign. The architect Alypius planned the work, but it was never completed. The earth at this time was troubled by strange upheavals, earthquakes, and ocean waves, and by some such phenomenon Jerusalem

would seem to have been visited;¹ perhaps during the excavations a well of naphtha was ignited. We only know that Christians, who saw in Julian's plan a defiance of prophecy, proclaimed a miracle, and that the Emperor did not live to prove them mistaken.

Thus in Antioch the relations between the sovereign and his people were growing woefully strained. Julian removed the bones of Saint Babylas from the precinct of Daphne and soon after the temple was burned to the ground. Suspicion fell upon the Christians and their great church was closed. A scarcity of provisions made itself felt in the city and Julian fixed a maximum price and brought corn from Hierapolis and elsewhere, and sold it at reduced rates. It was bought up by the merchants, and the efforts to coerce the senate failed. The populace ridiculed an Emperor whose aims and character they did not understand. The philosopher would not stoop to violence but the man in Julian could not hold his peace. The Emperor descended from the awful isolation which Diocletian had imposed on his successors; he challenged the satirists to a duel of wits and published the *Misopogon*. It was to sacrifice his vantage-ground. The chosen of Heaven had become the jest of the mob, and Julian's pride could have drained no bitterer cup. When he left the city for Persia, he had determined to fix his court, upon his return, at Tarsus, and neither the entreaties of Libanius nor the tardy repentance of Antioch availed to move him from his purpose.

Here but the briefest outline can be given of the oft-told tale of Julian's Persian expedition. Before it criticism sinks powerless, for it is a wonder-story and we cannot solve its riddle. The leader perished and the rest is silence: with him was lost the secret of his hopes. Julian left Antioch on 5 March 363 and on the 9th reached Hierapolis. Here the army had been concentrated and four days later the Emperor advanced at its head, crossed the Euphrates and passing through Batnae halted at Charrae. The name must have awakened gloomy memories and the Emperor's mind was troubled with premonitions of disaster; men said that he had bidden his kinsman Procopius mount the throne should he himself fall in the campaign. A troop of Persian horse had just burst plundering across the frontier and returned laden with booty; this event led Julian to disclose his plan of campaign. Corn had been stored along the road towards the Tigris, in order to create an impression that he had chosen that line for his advance; in fact the Emperor had determined to follow the Euphrates and strike for Ctesiphon. He would thus be supported by his fleet bearing supplies and engines of war. Procopius and Sebastianus he entrusted with 30,000 troops—almost half his army—and directed them to march towards the Tigris. They were for the present to act only on the defensive, shielding the eastern provinces from invasion and guarding his own forces from any Persian attack from the north. When he himself was once at grips

¹ Cf. Vita Artemii Mart. *AS. Boll.* Tom. viii. p. 883, § 66.

with Persia in the heart of the enemy's territory, Sapor would be forced to concentrate his armies, and then, the presence of Julian's generals being no longer necessary to protect Mesopotamia, should a favourable opportunity offer, they were to act in concert with Arsaces, ravage Chilioocomum, a fertile district of Media, and advance through Corduene and Moxoene to join him in Assyria. That meeting never took place: from whatever reason Procopius and Sebastianus never left Mesopotamia. Julian reviewed the united forces — 65,000 men — and then turned south following the course of the Belias (Belecha) until he reached Callinicum (Ar-Rakka) on 27 March.

Another day's march brought him to the Euphrates, and here he met the fleet under the command of the tribune Constantianus and the Count Lucillianus. Fifty warships, an equal number of boats designed to form pontoon bridges, and a thousand transports—the Roman armada seemed to an eyewitness fitly planned to match the magnificent stream on which it floated. Another 98 miles brought the army to Diocletian's bulwark fortress of Circesium (Karkisiya). Here the Aboras (Khabür) formed the frontier line; Julian harangued the troops, then crossed the river by a bridge of boats and began his march through Persian territory. In spite of omens and disregarding the gloomy auguries of the Etruscan soothsayers, the Emperor set his face for Ctesiphon; he would storm high Heaven by violence and bend the gods to his will. From its formation the invading army was made to appear a countless host, for their marching column extended over some ten miles, while neither the fleet nor the land forces were suffered to lose touch with each other. Some of the enemy's forts capitulated, the inhabitants of Anatha being transported to Chalcis in Syria, some were found deserted, while the garrisons of others refusing to surrender professed themselves willing to abide by the issue of the war. Julian was content to accept these terms and continued his unresting advance. Historians have blamed this rash confidence, whereby he endangered his own retreat. It is however to be remembered that a siege in the fourth century might mean a delay of many weeks, that the Emperor's project was clearly to dismay Persia by the rapidity of his onset and that it would seem probable that his plan of campaign had been from the first to return by the Tigris and not by the Euphrates. The Persians had intended a year or two before to leave walled cities untouched and strike for Syria, Julian in his turn refused to waste precious time in investing the enemy's strongholds, but would deal a blow against the capital itself. The march was attended with many difficulties: a storm swept down upon the camp, the swollen river burst its dams and many transports were sunk, the passage of the Narraga was only forced by a successful attack on the Persian rear which compelled them to evacuate their position in confusion, a mutinous and discontented spirit was shown by the Roman troops and the Emperor was forced to exert his personal influence and authority before discipline

was restored; finally the Persians raised all the sluices and, freeing the waters, turned the country which lay before the army into a widespread marsh. Difficulties however vanished before the resource and promptitude of the Emperor, and the advance guard under Victor brought him news that the country up to the walls of Ctesiphon was clear of the enemy. On the fall of the strong fortress of Maiozamalcha, the fleet followed the Naharmalcha (the great canal which united Euphrates and Tigris), while the army kept pace with it on land. The Naharmalcha, however, flows into the Tigris three miles below Ctesiphon, and thus the Emperor would have been forced to propel his ships *up stream* in his attack on the capital. The difficulty was overcome by clearing the disused canal of Trajan, down which the fleet emerged into the Tigris to the north of Ctesiphon. From the triangle thus formed by the Naharmalcha, the Tigris, and the canal of Trajan, Julian undertook the capture of the left bank of the river. Protected by a palisade, the Persians offered a stubborn resistance to the Roman night attack. The five ships first despatched were repulsed and set on fire; on the moment "it is the signal that our men hold the bank," cried the Emperor, and the whole fleet dashed to their comrades' support. Julian's inspiration won a field of battle for the Romans. Underneath a scorching sun the armies fought until the Persians — elephants, cavalry, and foot — were fleeing pell-mell for the shelter of the city walls; their dead numbered some 2500. Had the pursuit been pressed, Ctesiphon might perhaps have been won that day, but plunder and booty held the victors fast. Should the capital be besieged or the march against Sapor begun? It would almost seem that Julian himself wavered irresolute, while precious days were lost. Secret proposals of peace led him to underestimate the enemy's strength, while men, playing the part of deserters, offered to lead him through fertile districts against the main Persian army. Should he weary his forces and damp the spirit of his men by an arduous siege, he might not only be cut off from the reinforcements under Procopius and Sebastianus, but might find himself caught between two fires — Sapor's advance and the resistance of the garrison. To conclude a peace were unworthy of one who took Alexander for his model — better with his victorious troops to strike a final and conclusive blow, and possibly before the encounter effect a junction with the northern army. Crews numerous enough to propel his fleet against the stream he could not spare, and if he were to meet Sapor, he might be drawn too far from the river to act in concert with his ships: they must not fall into the enemy's hands, and therefore they must be burned. The resolution was taken and regretted too late; twelve small boats alone were rescued from the flames. Julian's plans miscarried, for the army of the north remained inactive, perhaps through the mutual jealousy of its commanders, and Arsaces withheld his support from the foe of Sapor. The Persians burned their fields before his advance, and the rich country-

side which traitorous guides had promised became a wilderness of ash and smoke. Orders were given for a retreat to Corduene; amidst sweltering heat, with dwindling stores, the Romans beheld to their dismay the cloud of dust upon the horizon which heralded Sapor's approach. At dawn the heavy-armed troops of Persia were close at hand and only after many engagements were beaten off with loss. After a halt of two days at Hucumbra, where a supply of provisions was discovered, the army advanced over country which had been devastated by fire, while the troops were constantly harassed by sudden onsets. At Maranga the Persians were once more reinforced; two of the king's sons arrived at the head of an elephant column and squadrons of mailed cavalry. Julian drew up his forces in semicircular formation to meet the new danger; a rapid charge disconcerted the Persian archers, and in the hand-to-hand struggle which followed the enemy suffered severely. Lack of provisions, however, tortured the Roman army during the three days' truce which ensued. When the march was resumed Julian learned of an attack upon his rear. Unarmed he galloped to the threatened point, but was recalled to the defence of the vanguard. At the same time the elephants and cavalry had burst upon the centre, but were already in flight when a horseman's spear grazed the Emperor's arm and pierced his ribs. None knew whence the weapon came, though rumour ran that a Christian fanatic had assassinated his general, while others said that a tribesman of the Taieni had dealt the fatal blow. In vain Julian essayed to return to the field of battle; his soldiers magnificently avenged their Emperor, but he could not share their victory. Within his tent he calmly reviewed the past and uncomplaining yielded his life into the keeping of the eternal Godhead. "In medio cursu florentium gloriarum hunc merui clarum e mundo digressum." Death in mercy claimed Julian. The impatient reformer and champion of a creed outworn might have become the embittered persecutor. Rightly or wrongly after generations would know him as the great apostate, but he was spared the shame of being numbered among the tyrants. He was born out of due time and therein lay the tragedy of his troubled existence; for long years he dared not discover the passionate desires which lay nearest his heart, and when at length he could give them expression, there were few or none fully to understand or sympathise. His work died with him, and soon, like a little cloud blown by the wind, left not a trace behind.

The next day at early dawn the heads of the army and the principal officers assembled to choose an Emperor. Partisans of Julian struggled with followers of Constantius, the armies of the West schemed against the nominee of the legions of the East, Christianity and Paganism each sought its own champion. All were however prepared to sink their differences in favour of Sallust, but when he pleaded ill-health and advanced age, a small but tumultuous faction carried the election of Jovian, the captain of the imperial guard. Down the long line of troops

ran the Emperor's name, and some thought from the sound half-heard that Julian was restored to them. They were undeceived at the sight of the meagre purple robe which hardly served to cover the vast height and bent shoulders of their new ruler. Chosen as a whole-hearted adherent of Christianity, Jovian was by nature genial and jocular, a gourmand and lover of wine and women — a man of kindly disposition and very moderate education. The army by its choice had foredoomed itself to dishonour; its excuse, pleads Ammianus, lay in the extreme urgency of the crisis. The Persians, learning of Julian's death and of the incapacity of his successor, pressed hard upon the retreating Romans; charges of the enemy's elephants broke the ranks of the legionaries while on the march, and when the army halted their entrenched camp was constantly attacked. Saracen horsemen took their revenge for Julian's refusal to give them their customary pay by joining in these unceasing assaults. By way of Sumere, Charcha, and Dara the army retired, and then for four whole days the enemy harassed the rear-guard, always declining an engagement when the Romans turned at bay. The troops clamoured to be allowed to cross the Tigris: on the further bank they would find provisions and fewer foes, but the generals feared the dangers of the swollen stream. Another two days passed — days of gnawing hunger and scorching heat. At last Sapor sent Surenas with proposals of peace. The king knew that Roman forces still remained in Mesopotamia and that new regiments could easily be raised in the Eastern provinces: desperate men will sell their lives dearly and diplomacy might win a less costly victory than the sword. Four days the negotiations continued, and then when suspense had become intolerable the Thirty Years' Peace was signed. All but one of the five satrapies which Rome under Diocletian had wrested from Persia were to be restored, Nisibis and Singara were to be surrendered, while the Romans were no longer to interfere in the internal affairs of Armenia. "We ought to have fought ten times over," cries the soldier Ammian, "rather than to have granted such terms as these!" But Jovian desired (by what means it mattered not) to retain a force which should secure him against rivals — Was not Procopius who, men said, had been marked out by Julian as his successor, at the head of an army in Mesopotamia? Thus the shameful bargain was struck, and the miserable retreat continued. To the horrible privations of the march were added Persian treachery and the bitter hostility of the Saracen tribesmen. At Thilsaphata the troops under Sebastianus and Procopius joined the army, and at length Nisibis was reached, the fortress which had been Rome's bulwark in the East since the days of Mithridates. The citizens prayed with tears that they might be allowed single-handed to defend the walls against the might of Persia; but Jovian was too good a Christian to break his faith with Sapor, and Bineses, a Persian noble, occupied the city in the name of his master. Procopius, who had been content to

acknowledge Jovian, now bore the corpse of Julian to Tarsus for burial, and then, his mission accomplished, prudently disappeared. The army in Gaul accepted the choice of their eastern comrades, but Jovian's success was short-lived. In the depth of winter he hurried from Antioch towards Constantinople and with his infant son, Varromianus, assumed the consulship at Ancyra. At Dadastana he was found dead in his bedroom (16 Feb. 364), suffocated some said by the fumes of a charcoal stove. Many versions of his death were current, but apparently no contemporary suspected other than natural causes. On his accession the Pagan party had looked for persecution, the Christians for the hour of their retaliation. But though the Christian faith was restored as the religion of the Empire, Jovian's wisdom or good nature triumphed and he issued an edict of toleration: he had thereby anticipated the policy of his successor.

CHAPTER III

CONSTANTINE'S SUCCESSORS (TO JOVIAN) AND THE STRUGGLE WITH PERSIA

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[A more complete critical bibliography will be found in N. H. Baynes' forthcoming translation of Ammianus Marcellinus]

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